



MAFES Dawg Tracks



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*Protect Your Hearing
on the Job*

Farm owners, farm workers and ranchers are exposed to many varying noises, many of which can cause hearing problems. Cattle in confined areas, tractors, combines, choppers and chainsaws are just a few examples of objects that can effect hearing quality.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that:

- ✓ 4 million workers go to work every day in damaging noise.
- ✓ 10 million people in the USA have noise-related hearing loss.
- ✓ 22 million workers are exposed to potentially damaging noise each year.
- ✓ In 2007: approximately 23,000 cases were reported of occupational hearing loss that was great enough to cause hearing impairment. Hearing losses accounted for 14% of all occupational illnesses in this same year.

How Noise can Hurt You-

- Working in noisy conditions at times
- Too much loud noise can:
 - ~ cause you to miss important safety instructions.
 - ~ result in stress from straining to listen and be heard.
 - ~ lead to hearing loss.
- Prolonged exposure to loud noise can result in permanent hearing loss.
- Exposure to loud noise for short periods of time can cause temporary loss of hearing.

Examples of Loud Noise-

- Noise is measured in a term called “decibels”.
- Noise levels of 85 decibels can affect your hearing, if you work around it more than 8 hours a Day.
- 85 decibels of noise can come from an idling tractor, combine, a grain dryer, and a conveyor.
- Using an old chainsaw, power tools or an idling tractor without a cab exposes y to even more dangerous noise levels.
- If you use power tools more than 1 hour a day, without hearing protection, you may damage your hearing.

How to tell if the Noise is hurting you-

You may have a problem if you:

- ✓ Hear ringing or other noises in your ears.
- ✓ Can’t hear people when they are talking to you.
- ✓ Can’t hear high pitched or soft sounds.

If you experience any of these problems, you should report it to your supervisor and get a hearing exam.

Tips to Protect your Hearing-

- Wear ear plugs when you are exposed to extremely loud noises.
- There are several types of earplugs available, some are disposable and other aren’t.

Do not stuff cotton in your ears, it won’t curb the noise and may damage your ears!

- Wearing ear muffs is another way to protect your hearing. They cover your entire ear, like a stereo headset.
- Earplug and earmuffs come with a “noise reduction rating” or a NRR. Be sure your ear protection, regardless of the type, has an NRR of at least 25.

Wearing Earplugs and Earmuffs-

- Wash your hands before you insert earplugs or put on earmuffs.
- Check for cracks or other damages. If you find a problem, contact your supervisor and get other hearing protection.
- Check the manufacturer’s instructions to find out the proper way to insert earplugs or to put on earmuffs.
- To insert foam earplugs, you should roll the plug up into a tiny cylinder and then insert it your ear. Hold it there until it expands.

Be sure that the earplugs or earmuffs fit comfortably, not too loose or too tight. The cups on the earmuffs shouldn’t pinch your ears.

HEARING PROTECTION – DO’S AND DON’TS

DO’S:

- ~ Use earplugs or earmuffs in noisy environments
- ~ Make sure that earplugs or earmuffs fit comfortably
- ~ Clean reusable earplugs after each use

DON’TS:

- ~ Stand too close to noisy machinery
- ~ Reuse disposable earplugs
- ~ Share your earplugs with your co-workers

Ted Gordon – Risk Mgmt. / Loss Control Mgr.
MAFES / MSU-ES (662) 566-2201

Excerpts: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/noise/chart-lookatnoise.html>
www.gemplers.com

HEARING PROTECTION IS A SOUND INVESTMENT

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